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January 1, 1940

Dr. Claude M. Fuess
Clerk of the Board of Trustees
Phillips Academy
Andover, Mass.

Dear Dr. Fuess:

During the past year the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology lost its Director-emeritus. Although Dr. Moorehead had not been well during the entire fall of 1938, his death on the 5th of January, 1939 came as a distinct shock to his many friends. Those of us who were privileged to serve under him feel the loss of a true and loyal friend.

The Blue Hill project reached a point at which it was possible to interrupt the work without running the risk of losing a site through pilferage. Three seasons have furnished information which has gone far to rob the Red Paint People of much of their air of mystery, and will make possible a fuller interpretation of these and other collections gathered by Dr. Moorehead in Maine in earlier years. Accordingly, the lack of sufficient funds to permit field work during 1939 has not seriously interfered with research on the problem. It should be borne in mind, however,

that knowledge can only be increased through a well balanced program of field work, laboratory research, and publication, and that if the Peabody Foundation is to maintain its place in the scientific world it would be unwise to contemplate a protracted period without active work in the field.

In May, Dr. Henry S. Howe, P.A. '22, wrote your Director advising him that the excavation for the foundation of the new building of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company, on the site of the old Technology buildings, would reach a depth never before reached in the Back Bay, that the site of the building was immediately adjacent to the place where a few stakes, thought to be part of an ancient fish weir, were found during the construction of the Boylston Street Subway in 1913, and that there was every reason to suppose that more stakes would be exposed. As a result of correspondence between the Peabody Foundation, the Insurance Company, and the Turner Bros. Construction Company, the contractors agreed to notify interested persons should anything of scientific interest be uncovered. On August 23, several stakes of the

ancient weir were discovered; the Foundation, as well as the Peabody Museum of Harvard, and the Boston Museum of Natural History were immediately apprised of the facts and work with the steam shovel was temporarily suspended.

Mr. Frederick Johnson, Curator of the Museum, immediately proceeded to Boston, got in touch with the proper authorities on the job and started to work on the following day. He was aided in his work at the excavation by John A. Rogge, P.A. '37, who had had earlier experience in the field at Blue Hill. Mr. Johnson was able to remove a number of stakes and to determine as far as possible the method of construction of the weir; he secured samples of shells from the several shell layers exposed, and samples of each of the strata, from the blue glacial clay at the bottom of the hole some fifty feet below the surface of Boylston Street, to the topmost layer of peat under the gravel fill. This is the first complete soil column from the Back Bay ever secured for this type of study! Mr. Johnson continued his work at the Boylston Street excavation for two weeks, securing all the data that were available. Subsequently he visited the

hole about three days per week noting the position of new stakes exposed by the steam shovel, and securing further data as they appeared. During this work he was given every courtesy by engineers and officials of the Turner Company who allowed him complete freedom in the excavation and gladly furnished him with laborers and surveyors and supplied him with accurate figures for the depth and location of the various features in which he was interested. It is a distinct pleasure to record this fact and express the appreciation of the Peabody Foundation for the many courtesies.

Following the actual work at the site, Mr. Johnson proceeded with the more technical aspects of the undertaking, consulting with Mr. Dake on certain problems connected with the dehydration of the wood by means of alcohol. The complete process of preservation will consume approximately a year.

To interpret fully all the data secured, the aid of eleven different experts has been enlisted. These include Dr. I.W. Bailey, the greatest living authority on wood structure and chemistry, and Dr. Wetmore, both of the Division of Biology;

Dr. Hugh M. Raup, of the Arnold Arboretum; Dr. Kirk Bryan and Dr. Lawrence LaForge of the Department of Geology; Dr. David Linder of the Farlow Herbarium; Dr. W.C. Darrah of the Department of Botany; and Mr. William J. Clench of the Department of Zoology, all of Harvard University; Dr. Henry Stetson of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute; Dr. Clapp of the Clapp Laboratories, Duxbury, Mass.; Mr. Blake of the Boston Museum of Natural History; and Dr. Hervev W. Shimer of the Department of Geology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The active and interested cooperation of all these scientists has combined to give an extremely full interpretation of the data. They show at present that the land of the Back Bay has settled about 13 feet since the weir was built. Boston enjoyed a warmer climate at that time, but it grew progressively cooler from then on. Indications from incomplete research are that numerous facts of general and particular interest will eventually be discovered. When the studies have been completed they will be released in a report on all aspects of the problem under the imprint of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation. An important feature of this publication

will be the application of so many methods of research to a particular problem. It will be the first time that such an extensive collaboration has been organized. That this reflects to the credit of Phillips Academy is obvious. The fish weir and its related studies are already known far and wide in the scientific world as one of the richest mines of information regarding the flora, molluscan fauna, and climate of eastern New England that has been known. The location of the fish weir is of vital importance to students of the post glacial history of the northeastern seaboard.

It would not be right to neglect to mention the unfailing interest and enthusiasm of Mr. George Willard Smith, President of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company. Mr. Smith has given the sum of two hundred dollars from company funds to meet the expenses of the various scientists and to pay for the expense incurred in connection with the preservation of the wood.

No work aside from that on the fish weir has been carried on outside the building. Explorations in the building itself have led to several interesting discoveries regarding specimens in storage;

as an example there may be cited the first painted pottery ever reported in New England, which had lain unrecognized in the Museum for nearly twenty years because the specimens had never been washed and studied! The time necessary to sort out and analyze the collections preparatory to installing our new exhibits has been greater than was at first believed necessary, but it is a pleasure to record the fact that the exhibitions in the North Room on the second floor are nearly complete. Mr. Travis has been largely responsible for the color scheme and design of what will be the finest installation of this type of material in any archaeological museum in the country. The room will not be opened to the public, however, until the delicate work of installing Mr. Travis's model of the pueblo of Pecos is complete. A part of the Pueblo was excavated by Dr. A.V. Kidder as head of the Foundation's Southwest Expedition during the years from 1915 to 1929.

One of the important functions of the Museum is the answering of the many questions it receives concerning the collections and the archaeological problems under investigation by the staff. This

steadily increasing correspondence comes from numerous archaeologists, as distantly located as Texas and California, who desire information or aid. In addition, representatives of various institutions have visited the Museum to study the collections and discuss their several problems, a sure indication that the Museum is adding to its reputation in its field.

In exchange for collections of duplicate material secured during the excavation of Pecos, the Museum has received several collections for exhibition and study which could not otherwise have been obtained. These new acquisitions include collections from the mounds of Ohio, from California, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Labrador and other regions. Such additions increase the general interest and value of the Museum and add materially to our exhibits. The Museum contributed to the Indian Arts Exhibition at the San Francisco Worlds Fair.

2542 specimens received from all sources have been catalogued during the current year. As a result of work on our own collections 75 specimens have been recatalogued. Since the inauguration of

the new catalogue system in 1936 a total of 7326 specimens have been catalogued.

Both of the Foundation's secondhand station wagons were traded in towards a new International station wagon, delivered in the spring of 1939. The wisdom of carrying through this exchange in spite of the shortness of funds is evident from the work accomplished. During the seven months since its purchase, the car has covered 3600 miles.

During the winter and spring, the members of the staff studied the problem of public education in archaeology. This resulted in the formation of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society at meetings held in Andover in March and April. While no member of the staff is an active officer of the Society, its officers are so closely linked to the Peabody Foundation that the two are intimately identified. The Museum has been named the official repository for the Society. This has, in fact, made our Museum an important center for the accumulation of archaeological information, and will, in time, pay handsome dividends. It has also served to place the Academy before an active, interested and intelligent section of the public whose numbers are

rapidly increasing. This will result in frequent contacts between the public and the Academy - truly a most desirable type of publicity.

The Peabody Foundation has been represented at every important archaeological conference or meeting held in the northeastern part of the country during 1939; one in New York, one in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and one in Chicago, in addition to the meetings of state archaeological societies in New England. At the meeting of the Society for American Archaeology held at Ann Arbor in May Mr. Johnson and Mr. Byers both presented papers, while Mr. Johnson prepared a paper for the Chicago meeting to be read by someone else since he was unable to attend. At the Ann Arbor meeting Mr. Byers was elected Editor, in charge of the Society's quarterly journal, "American Antiquity". Mr. Johnson is the editor of the Society's "Notebook", a less formal monthly release.

Mr. Johnson was asked to contribute to a semi-popular volume concerned with the aborigines of Central America, scheduled for release during the late spring or early summer. His contribution is a linguistic map of the region. This map,

assembled from data contained in some three hundred publications, will become an authoritative source, replacing two which were published in 1911 and 1920. Although the work was on a part time basis the result will reflect to the credit of the Academy.

The Peabody Foundation library is cooperating with the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library in making books available for study by boys who wish to prepare papers for courses in English that may be correlated with other subjects. The library is also used by students who wish to do reading in their spare time. Cooperating in inter-library loans, the library sent books to persons in the south and west for use in connection with certain problems of research. A total of 28 new books have been catalogued by the library during the year. The library was very fortunate in being able to secure a complete set of Schoolcraft's "Information Respecting the History, Conditions and Prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States", published in 1847-1857. In addition the library receives a total of 47 serial publications of which 34 are received in exchange and 13 are

subscribed to. These serial publications are all completely analyzed. The library contains a total of 1472 books, this figure does not include the unbound serial publications.

The first number of the new series of publications to be issued by the Foundation, "Excavations on Martha's Vineyard" will go to press as soon as certain animal bones have been identified by Dr. Glover M. Allen. A library of such bone is being collected here, so that in time it will be possible to identify the various species from reference material in the Museum without the need to consult persons outside the institution.

It is a pleasure to note that during the year valuable connections with the scientific staffs of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been made. Aid and cooperation from both institutions has been readily forthcoming, and the great interest taken by the several men bespeaks a wholesome spirit of cooperation that promises well for the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas S. Myers
Director

